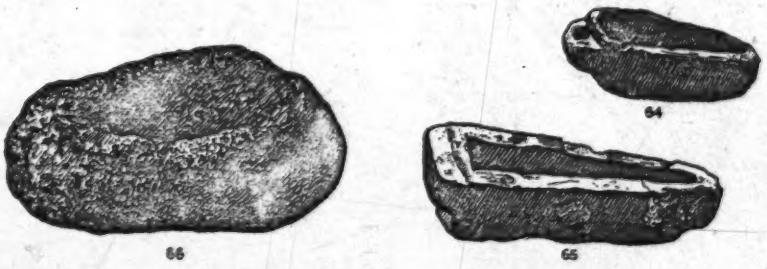
CHAPTER VII

STONE LAMPS

I discovered 36 stone lamps in excavations in Kamchatka. Some of them were broken. All the types of ancient Kamchadal stone lamps are shown in Plates 14 and 15 and text-figures 64 to 66. They are not remarkable for great diversity as to size and form. I mentioned Aleut lamps[1] longer than 310 mm., and one lamp 1 meter long. There is in the U. S. National Museum at Washington an unusually large stone lamp (No. 90476) from Kodiak Island which weighs 67½ pounds.[2] An Eskimo stone lamp 43 inches long (i. e., somewhat



64. Stone lamp of sandstone.
65. Stone lamp of porphyrite.
66. Stone lamp of andesitic lava, in process of manufacture.
All of Kuril Lake.

longer than a meter), weighing about 50 pounds is in the American Museum of Natural History of New York. Dr. Stefanson saw several larger lamps, but was unable to purchase them from their owners.[3]

The Kamchadal stone lamps show the following shapes: circular, elliptical, egg-like and sad-iron in outline. No lamps of rectangular form, like those of the Aleut, and clam-shell shaped or crescentic in outline, like those of the Eskimo of Cumberland Gulf or Point Barrow, were excavated in Kamchatka.

Lamp No. 3158 shows the cavity rudely picked out with a hammerstone in the process of manufacture. All the other illustrations of lamps show them in a finished shape and polished. The straight rims of some lamps were chiseled out with hard quartz chisels (see No. 2183). Most of the lamps are flat-bottomed, so they stand without support. The lamp was put on a wooden stand in a somewhat

[1] W. Jochelson, *Archæological Investigations in the Aleutian Islands*, p. 74.
[2] Walter Hough, *The Lamp of the Eskimo*, Annual Report, U. S. National Museum for the year 1897, Washington, 1898, pp. 1027–1057.
[3] See Vilhjamur Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimo*, New York, 1913, p. 249.

5: Jochelson A-5 (1910-11) 1928 Kamchadal

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slanting position (in the sad-iron shape the narrow end was lower) so that the tallow or blubber could run down to the wick from the heat of the flame. The Kamchadal used bear's tallow or seal's blubber, and also fish oil for lighting purposes. The present Kamchadal sometimes still use stone lamps for lighting, but often a tin box, iron frying pan, or a clam-shell substitutes for the stone lamp. In order to be relieved of the sharp odor, smoke and soot of the burning lamp the present Kamchadal put over the lamp a funnel made of birch bark, upside down, the upper tube of which is led outside through the ceiling (see figures 67, 68).[1] The wick consists of a bunch of dry grass, moss or of rag placed at the edge of the slanting lamp. At present the Kamchadal women make wicks of plaited nettle threads. Like the Aleut lamps, the Kamchadal stone lamps had no bridges or special grooves for the wicks, which we find in the Eskimo lamps. The only use of the Kamchadal lamp was for lighting purposes. The Kamchadal did not warm themselves over the lamp, like the Aleut, nor cook like the Eskimo. The Kamchadal had sufficient wood for making a fire when necessary, and their hearths warmed their earth-huts and served for frying meat and cooking vegetables and soups in clay vessels. The lamp was lighted from the hearth, which was usually always burning. The hearth was covered with ashes for the night, so that the smoldering fire might not be extinguished during the night. The fire of the hearth was looked on as the protector of the dwelling, and it was regarded as an unhappy omen should it go out. Once a year, however, at the beginning of winter, the family fire was put out, the hearth cleaned from old ashes, and a new fire started by the drill and sacred fire-board. The burning stone lamps were also extinguished and lighted again from the hearth's new fire.

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The Kamchadal lamps were made mostly from hard rock material, usually varieties of quartz. No lamps of soapstone, material in use among the Eskimo, were found in the Kamchatka excavations; neither were any of bone, of which the ancient Aleut made lamps. As the wick was placed by the Kamchadal at the edge of the lamp the borders of a bone lamp would have been burned off by the flame.

The cavity for oil or fat in some Kamchadal lamps represents a flat bottom with straight sides, while in others the bottom is rounded (see Plates 14, 15).

[1] Figures 67 and 68 are taken from Dr. W. N. Tyushov's book: *Along the Western Coast of Kamchatka*, Memoirs of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society on General Geography, vol. XXXVII, No. 2, St. Petersburg, 1908, in Russian, figures 28 (p. 342) and 29 (p. 342).

5: Jochelson A-5 (1910–11) 1928 Kamchadal
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1 (2211). Small lamp of quartz slate. Nalachevo Lake.
2 (3232). Cemented fragments of lamp of diorite. Kuril Lake.
3 (3130). Lamp of quartz slate. From Kuril Lake.
4 (3137). Lamp of quartzite. From Kuril Lake.
5 (3138). Lamp of sandstone. From Kuril Lake.
6 (3139). Lamp of quartz schist. From Kuril Lake.
7 (2921). Lamp of quartz schist. From Kavran site.
8 (2922). Lamp of quartzite. From Kavran.
9 (2923). Lamp of quartz slate. From Kavran.
10 (3143). Lamp of quartz slate. From Kuril Lake.
11 (3144). Lamp of quartzite. From Kuril Lake.
12 (3145). Lamp of quartz schist. From Kuril Lake.

Figures 1, 2 half natural size, figures 3 to 12 two-fifths natural size.

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1 (3160). Lamp of andesitic lava.
2 (3161). Lamp of quartz schist.
3 (3162). Lamp of andesitic lava.
4 (3163). Lamp of quartz schist.
5 (3164). Lamp of quartzite.
6 (3165). Lamp of andesitic lava.
7 (3166). Lamp of quartz schist.
8 (3167). Lamp of quartzite.

All specimens from Kuril Lake. About two-fifths natural size.

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

342 of thatch, or dried graſs, placed upon long
354 poles faſtened together at the top, and bear-
511 ing upon the rafters. This is at once the
417 firſt and laſt ſtory; it forms the whole apartment, or rather chamber: an opening in the roof ſerves inſtead of a chimney to let out the ſmoke, when a fire is lighted to dreſs their victuals; this cookery is performed in the middle of the room, where they eat and ſleep pell-mell together without the leaſt diſguſt or ſcruple. In theſe apartments, windows are out of the queſtion; there is merely a door, ſo low and narrow, that it will ſcarcely ſuffice to admit the light. The ſtair-caſe is worthy of the reſt of the building; it conſiſts of a beam, or rather a tree jagged in a ſlovenly manner, one end of which reſts on the ground, and the other is raiſed to the height of the floor. It is placed at the angle of the door, upon a level, with a kind of open gallery that is erected before it. This tree

retains

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

000 have proceeded from the north, and been very heavy, which was confirmed by the inhabitants. Our road lay invariably through a foreſt of birch trees, and for ſome time we loſt ſight of the mountains, by which we had paſſed the preceding evening; but as we drew nearer to Pouſchiné they became viſible again.

354 The Kamtſchatka runs by the lower end
361 of this oſtrog, which is larger than that of
342 Ganal. The only thing I remarked in this place was, that the iſbas had no chimneys; they have only, like the balagans, a narrow opening in the roof to let out the ſmoak, which is frequently cloſed up by a trap door to confine the heat. It is not poſſible to continue in apartments warmed in this manner; we muſt either come out, or proſtrate ourſelves on the floor, if we would eſcape being ſtifled, or at leaſt blinded, by the ſmoke: it does not aſcend directly towards

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

354 wards the roof, but ſpreads a thick black
342 cloud over the chamber; and as it ſeldom has time wholly to evaporate, the interior part of theſe iſbas is lined with ſoot, which gives them a diſguſting aſpect and a moſt offenſive ſmell.

354 But it is ſtill leſs unpleaſant than the
356 noiſome odour exhaled from a diſmal lamp, that ſerves as a light to the whole houſe. Its form is not of the moſt elegant kind: it is ſimply a hollow pebble or ſtone, with a rag rolled up in the middle for a wick, round which is placed the greaſe of the ſea wolf, or other animals. As ſoon as the wick is lighted, we are immediately ſurrounded with a dark and thick vapour, which contributes equally with the ſmoke to blacken the whole room: it ſeiſes the noſe and throat, and penetrates to the very heart. This is not the only diſagreeable ſmell that is experienced in theſe habitations; there is

Lesseps T-3 (1787-88) 1790 Kamchadal

342 ground, is like a truncated cone. To
354 form a juſt idea of them, we muſt conceive of a large ſquare hole about twelve or fourteen yards in diameter, and eight feet deep; the four ſides are lined with joiſts or boards, and the interſtices of theſe walls are filled up with earth, ſtraw, or dried graſs, and ſtones. In the bottom of this hole various poſts are fixed, that ſupport the cross beams upon which the roof reſts. The roof begins upon a level with the ground, and riſes four feet above it; it is two feet thick, has a very gradual ſlope, and is made of the ſame materials as the walls. Towards the top is a ſquare opening, about four feet long and three wide, which ſerves as a paſſage for the ſmoke * and an entrance to the

* There is ſuch a continual ſmoke in theſe ſubterraneous habitations, that the opening in the roof is not ſufficient to let it out, and there is therefore in an unoccupied corner of the yourt, behind the fire-place, a kind of vent-hole in an oblique direction. It is called *joupann*; it terminates without, at a little diſtance from the ſquare opening, and is commonly cloſed up with a mat or ſtraw covering.

352 bench is only a foot from the ground *,
511 and commonly ſerves as a bed for a num-
514 ber of families. I have counted in one yourt more than twenty perſons, men, women, and children. They eat, drink, and ſleep pell mell together, ſatisfy all the calls of nature without reſtraint or modeſty, and never complain of the noxious air that
354 prevails in theſe places. It is true there is
353 a fire almoſt inceſſantly. The fire-place is commonly either in the middle of the yourt or againſt one of the ſides. In the evening they rake the coals in a heap, and ſhut the entrance of the yourt, where the ſmoke ſhould evaporate; and thus the heat is concentrated, and kept up during the whole night. By means of a diſmal lamp, the form and diſagreeable ſmell of which I have before deſcribed, we diſcover in one

* Some of the yourts which I ſaw were floored with planks; but this is regarded as a luxury, and the generality have no other floor than the ground.

corner

/333 cont./

342 The next Paleo-Asiatic people, the Kamchadal, lived
195 through the winter exclusively in earth yurts at the time of Steller and Krascheninnikof. One finds a detailed description by the two travelers and in Steller there is even a plan and a view of the
342 interior (7). Apart from minor details in its interior arrangement
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7. Steller, Beschr. von dem Lande Kamtschatka /Description of the Country of Kamchatka/, Frankfort and Leipzig, 1774, p. 212; Krasheninnikov", "Opis. zemli Kamchatki /A Description of Kamchatka/" Poln. sobr. uchen. putesh. po Rossii, izdav. Imp. Akad. Nauk", Vol. II, St. Petersburg, 1819, p. 37).

/334/ the Kamchadal earth-yurt showed an interesting deviation from the one of the Gilyak in that in it the outer, covered passageway leading to the door became a channel, which, with its interior opening directed toward the hearth in the middle of the yurt, served to produce a strong draft when a fire was made, but afterwards, when the fire had gone out, was closed at its
[417] outer end. According to Steller (1), only children were permitted

1. Op. cit., p. 214.

to crawl in and out of the yurt through this channel (2); the smoke

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2. According to Krascheninnikof (op. cit., p. 40), also women and kojektschutsch or kojachtschitsch (Steller, op. cit. p. 351, note), i.e., men who behaved like women on the other hand, if a man had done it, he would have exposed himself to the derision of all those present. As a consequence of garbling the Kamchadal designation for the outer opening of this channel (schoponatsch), the Russian Cossacks call it shupan.

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hole directly above the hearth, from which an oblique beam with deep notches led down to the floor of the yurt, served the adults for entering and leaving. As Steller reports (3), on account of

3. Op. cit., pp. 8 and 240.

their earth yurts, the Kamchadal of the Penshini (Okhotsk) Sea were called "Namalau" or "Namalan," i.e., living in subterranean houses, by their northern neighbors, the Reindeer Koryak -- a designation from which Gerland derives the name Namollo for the Eskimo or Juit /Yuit/ -- as they call themselves -- who migrated back from America to the Asiatic coast of the Bering Sea (4).

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4. G. Gerland, "Zur Ethnogr. des äussersten Nordostens von Asien /On the Ethnography of the Extreme Northeastern Part of Asia/" (Zeitschr. der Gesell. für Erdkunde zu Berlin, Vol. XVIII, 1883, p. 221). I am not able to decide whether this derivation is justified, but in any case Gerland has completely misunderstood the above statement by Steller, in that he thinks that the Koryak designate with the first of these names (Namalau) the Kamchadal living along the Kamchatka River, and with the latter (Namalan) the Tungus, likewise because of their earth yurts. According to Steller, these names refer neither to the one nor to the other, but both alike to the Kamchadal (Italmen) along the Sea of Okhotsk (Penshini /Penzhina/). He expressly states about those living along the Kamchatka River that the Koryak call them Jutilitan, but is unable to give any reason for it (p. 8); concerning the Tungus, however -- who, by the way, have no earth yurts at all -- he notes only (p. 240) that they, in spite of their frequent raids extending to the Penshina River even before the arrival of the Russians,